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Notes and News about the meetings held and forthcoming Conferences

14th December, 1989

A Seminar on "Political Geography of Contemporary Events", was held at the Department of Geography, University of Poona, on November 9-10, 1989.

Convened and organised by Jaymala Diddee and P. R. Karmarkar, the seminar centred round Dennis Rumley, a political Geographer from the University of Western Australia, Nedlands, Perth, during his week long visit to the University, Department of Geography.

The inaugural address was delivered by the Chancellor's nominee, C. D. Deshpande, a doyen among Indian Geographers and an educationist of repute. Dennis Rumley's key-note lecture reflected the Anglo-American views on the status of political geography, its concerns and core issues. In his talks, Rumley focussed largely on State Federal Relations and the geography of electoral participation in the context of Western Australia.

Among the delegates, besides geographers and political geographers, there were resource persons from the Departments of Defence Science and Strategic Studies, the Defence forces, political science and sociology, imparting to the seminar a truly interdisciplinary spirit. About 30 college teachers attended the seminar. A few college teachers also read papers, while a number of them voiced their views on the topics discussed.

Though the Seminar addressed itself to a variety of contemporary issues pertaining to the Indian sub-continent, one of the prime objectives of this meet was to make a reconnaissance of the recent directions in Indian political geography. The issues which Indian political geographers consider relevant to Indian reality, also figured prominently in the discussions.

R. C. Sharma from Delhi, spoke on the underlying complexities in Saarc relations, while R. N. P. Sinha from Baroda gave an erudite account of the evolution of Indian Geopolitics. Gautam Sen from Defence Studies highlighted the Geostrategic implications on the use of military force in the Indian Ocean. A lively talk by Gen. Vas brought to the fore the processes that may be directly or indirectly responsible for the separatist movements in the North-East Region. The historical perspective on the boundaries issue pertaining to the McMahon Line was discussed by R. C. Tiwari from Bombay.

In the concluding session, the participants were invited to express their opinion on the issues raised and to make suggestions for future course of action. A need to set up an inter-disciplinary study group of Area Studies, including all the countries of the Indian Ocean Region was felt by Dennis Rumley and R. C. Sharma. Presently,

a serious information drought exists among these countries even about their Regional geographies. This needs to be redressed, if one seeks to promote a better understanding of their mutual problems, interests and conflicts, particularly those arising out of ethno-regional inequality, as seen among the states of South-East Asia.

Among the issues requiring greater attention, it was observed that political geographers, need (my bias) to research on the 'ethnic resurgence', so widespread in contemporary times. Also, there is need for careful investigation into the 'environments of conflict': a phenomenon of increasing concern in the modern world.

There was a general agreement to bring out the proceedings of the seminar with a view to provide a prologue to contemporary concerns in political geography, relevant to the Indian situation.

Our grateful thanks are due to the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. S. C. Gupte, who extended whole hearted encouragement and financial support, without which it would hardly be possible to put together the seminar in such a short time.

We also thank our members of the faculty, students and the administrative people who put in extra effort to make the seminar a success.

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Jaymala Diddee

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Twelfth Annual Conference

INSTITUTE OF INDIAN GEOGRAPHERS (I I G)

14th to 16th February 1991, VADODARA

Focal theme : RAPID URBANISATION, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Excursion : Sardar Sarovar, Narmada valley, 17th February 1991

For details contact : Dr. (Ms.) Vimla Rangaswamy

PRESIDENT OF THE MEET

Department of Geography, M. S. University of Baroda
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23rd to 25th November 1990, PUNE

For details contact : Dr. S. R. Jog

CONVENER

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